SERMON

Preached before the People called

QUAKERS,

IN THE

Park of Southwark:

On the 27*th.* of the 9*th.* Month, called by some *Nov.* 1687.

By a Reverend and Dearly beloved Sister, who came from *Scotland* to rejoyce with Us for our LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE; and leave her Testimony at *London.*

Wherein is contained a Word, concerning the *PENAL LAWS* and *TESTS.*

PSALM CXXVI. I.

When the LORD *turned again the Captivity of* Zion, *we were like them that Dream.*

LONDON,

Printed for *N. H.* MDCLXXXVIII.

SERMON

Preached before the People called

QUAKERS

IN THE

Meeting-House in Southwark.

On occasion of the 30th March called ... Day

By a Reverend and Dearly beloved Sifter

who came from Scotland to reside in London

LIBERTUM CONSCIENTIÆ ... and leave them

Tolerably at Liberty.

Wherein is contained a Word concerning the PENNS

... and LOCKE.

PSALM CXXVII. ...

Unless THE LORD ... the City ... in vain ...

LONDON

Printed for M. H. ...

SERMON

Preached before the People called

QUAKERS.

My Dearly Beloved,

IT hath been the earnest desire of my Soul to see you in the flesh, to rejoyce together, and congratulate that longed for Christian *Liberty of Conscience*, which our King hath been pleased to grant unto all his Subjects. Let no man henceforth judge to the outward appearance, nor pass sentence on a bare *Possibility*. Truly about four years ago, *The Duke of York's Succession* to the Crown, was a *Bug-bear* of *Intrusion* that frightned three Nations out of their wits: But like *Samsons* Lyon and Riddle, *Out of the Eater came forth meat, and out of the strong hath come forth sweetness.* This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Truly (*Beloved Brethren and Sisters*,) tho *the Conscience cannot be compelled*, the Oppression and Tyranny we were under, these several years by past, was a great stumbling block in the way of our patience; when the wicked and ungodly did rob us under pretence of Religion; and threaten to knock us in the heads for Conference sake: imprisoning us because we did not pay to the *Tithe-takers*, *Hirelings*, *Babie-sprinklers* whatever they pleased. *Helis* Sons made the Lord's Offering to be abhorred, because they did exact upon the people, and took according to their own pleasure by force. *Paul* could rather willingly work for his Living than be burdensom to the Flock over

which the Holy Ghost had made him Overseer: Therefore said to the *Corinthians*, *I will not be burdensome to you; For I seek not yours but you.* But Thieves and Robbers, who enter not at the door, but climb up by the walls may invert the order, and say, *I seek not you, but yours.*

Religion is [illegible] made a v[illegible]over Villany. The Devil cloathes himself with Scripture when he tempted our Saviour: But he is more formidable when transformed to an Angel of Light. *Demetrius* and his demented Crew of Crafts-men could under a pretence of Religion and Love to their great Goddess *Diana* and her Temple, oppose the doctrine of Christ, and cry out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, whilst they never cared for her nor her Temple either, but only for their own gain. The *Jews* in the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s time could cry, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*, yet did trust lying words, that could not Profit, Steal, Murder, commit Adultery, and Swear falsly; But the Lord's command to them was throughly to amend their waies, throughly to execute judgment and leave off Oppression: This is very applicable to these fat *Bulls of Bashan*, and lean Kine of *Egypt*, who have oppressed us these several years by perfidious Arts. But since it hath pleased God (who rules the hearts of Kings) to deliver us from this *Egyptian Bondage*, let us freely forgive them, and pray for them, lest (being hardened in their own impenitency) we be left in the Wilderness of our own weakness, and be destroyed by the old fiery Serpent.

But above all things (*My beloved Lambs*) since God and the King have given us freedom of Truth, let every one use his talent to the best advantage; (and laying aside all malice, guile, and hypocrisie, sloth, and covetousness;) stand upon his Watch-Tower, waiting for the voice and coming of the Bridegroom of our Souls: for the Devil is busier now, and hath more advantage to gain ground upon us than when we were made cautious by the constant alarums of our assaulting Enemy. Outward crosses drive a man to inward Piety and tranquillity of mind. *Sorrow is better than laughter* (saith *Solomon*) *for by the sadness of the Countenance the heart is made better.*

The blood of the Martyrs was reputed the seed of the Primitive Church. *Hannibal*'s Army was indefatigable, and by the *Romans* esteemed invincible, till they gave themselves to ease, wine, and voluptuous diet. *Noah* was not drunk, whilst he was in fear of the flood, building

building an Ark for his own safety. *Lot* was not insnar'd in uncleanness, whilst the wicked in *Sodom* daily vexed his Soul.

Be watchful then (my dearly beloved) lest ye defile your Garments, and the shame of your nakedness be seen. The Conscience is *The Holy of Holies*, which the great *High Priest* only doth enter. It is the Candle of the Lord that giveth light to our path, the *primum mobile* of the little world. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, when darkness covered the face of the Deep: Even so the light of the Conscience shineth and giveth light to the inner Man, tho no outward Sun, Moon, nor Star appear. It is a Lanthorn which none can extinguish but he who beareth it. Keep then your hearts with all diligence, and Consciences void of offence towards God and Man.

Above all things (My Brethren) Love one another; Love is the Badge of Christianity, and the mark of the true Church. *Apollyon* the destroying King of the bottomless Pit dare not shew his face where true love is. *Love*, *Life*, and *Light*, are the Epethites by which God expresseth himself. They are inseparable concomitants, and wherever they are, God is not far off. *Love worketh no ill to his Neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law. It suffereth long, and is kind, it envieth not, it vaunteth not it self, it is not puffed up, it doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;* and in one word, *Love never faileth.* But be not deceived (My dear Brethren and Sisters) *If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Be merciful one to another, for the merciful doth obtain mercy. Rather suffer injury than be heard before those which are none of our Society. Let never a persecuting Spirit have dominion over you; but learn of Christ to be meek and lowly. Carnal weapons, *Instruments of Cruelty*, have no sympathy with the *sword of the Spirit*, wherewith Christ overcame *The Wicked One*, and reconcil'd the world to God again.

That man that walketh on Crutches, is never strong in the Limbs: A Religion *by Law Established* is horrible Non-sence, Law and Gospel are *repugnantia in adjecto*, they never agree well together, 'tis a Figurative Religion; like *hysteron proteron*, or a man walking backwards.

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A Conscience regulate by humane Power, is like a Diamond set in Brass, or a Glass with Iron Hoops, a *Fox* keeping Sheep, or a Malefactor made a Judge. *Paul* appealed to *Cæsar* and lost his Head for his pains. Therefore that Church that maketh the arm of Flesh her trust, may be questioned whether she be the true Church or not. *Moses* and *Joshua* (tho they knew the truth of their Religion) did not force the Children of *Israel* to accept of it, but set *life and death before them*; but the punishment of obstinacy they left to the Lord. Paul *may plant, and* Apollos *may water, but God gives the increase*. He is a foolish Steward that forceth a Servant to his Master, whom he knoweth he will not accept of. How then can rational men force one another to accept of that Religion which they think true, whilst they know that God accepteth none but those that come willingly. He *only* can make people willing in the day of his power. All the Host of Hell could not prevail with the Apostles, yet soberly could they say, *The love of Christ constraineth us*. A Poet of my acquaintance compared a persecuting Church to

A Golden Cup of Dragon's Poyson full,
Or Aaron's *Calf grown to* Perillus's *Bull;*
Which is made this or that, or what you will,
As doth the State Affairs require it still.
A strange Hysteron Proteron! *Sad fate,*
To see the Church the Basis of the State.

Paul's Persecution (tho it was zeal wrapt up in ignorance) was a heinous sin before the Lord. None must do evil that good *may* follow. He that would propagate and enlarge God's Church by Blood and Persecution is like one who (under pretence of zeal) would steal money to give the poor, and so make his Theft the Author of his Charity.

The Church is Christ's Spouse, the Bride, the Lambs Wife; he fought a duel with the Devil and Death for her, his right is good: Let him then be head of his own Body, if any thing be interposed the Son of Righteousness is Eclipsed, and darkness is over the whole Members.

Penal Laws and Tests are but the Patrons of Hypocrisie, and the Sword of the Spirit of Antichrist; *Hob-goblings* of Apostacy wrapt up in Sheeps Cloathing which (at a distant seem innocent, but approaching nearer found to be like ravenous Wolves) which frighten

ten Men in the Kingdom of Darkneſs to ſacrifice both Faith and Conſcience to brazen faced Babylonian Violence and Inhumane power.

Let God then be Guardian of his own Church; The Spirit of meekneſs is not a Spirit of outward violence, but a ſtill and calm voice. One who was my Perſecuter in a ſober fit told me, he never like'd the Religion that was thruſt in at a Man's Broad-ſide with the point of a Sword; yet however it be the Devil is no gainer: For the Palm of victory flourſheth beſt under the burden of Perſecution, when the Children of Men Lord it over God's heritage. Be ſtedfaſt then and Waver not, neither draw back whatſoever be your condition; ſweet Meats muſt be eaten with ſour Sauce, good Bees draw Hony from bitter Herbs; the Rod and the Staff go well together, outward Troubles are the *Prævors* Spiritual which drive us within the line of the Church-militant. The Lord thought it not fit to caſt out all the Enemies of the Children of *Iſrael* in one year, leſt the Beaſts of the field ſhould prevail againſt them; even ſo, if we had no Temptations to drive us to the Throne of Grace, and keep us on our guard, we would become ſecure and confide in our own ſelves, and our own bruitiſh and corrupt Natures would prevail againſt us.

Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man; pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs, and Widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World. Let every one order his Converſation aright, and ſtrive to keep free from all known ſin, and to him that hath learned this leſſon, God will ſhew what further he would have done; according to that of the King and Prophet *David*. *To him that ordereth his Converſation aright, will I ſhew the Salvation of God: For the ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant.* Thus, it is not Sayers, nor bare Believers that are juſtified before God, and to whom he giveth the Spirit of diſcerning to chuſe the good, and refuſe the evil; but, *What Man is he that feareth the Lord, him ſhall he teach in the Way that he ſhall chuſe.*

Do not err then my beloved Brethren, neither give heed to the various Opinions of Men of Corrupt Minds, diſtitute of the Truth, and toſt about with the Wind of the Times, changing their Doctrin for filthy Lucar's ſake, and unadviſedly contradicting their former Aſſertions. *The Goſpel of Chriſt is but one, and every good gift comes down from the Father of Light, with whom is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning.* Fix not your *Faith* to a *future Contingency*, nor tip your belief with the turnings of Time; a Poet exclaiming againſt this Evil, ſaith,

The World's confuſ'd, while (in a lofty ſtrain)
Each Fool aſks Priſt, the Notions of his Brain.

Neither give your ſelves to read idle Controverſies, though they be guilded with the Title *of the Learned*, for by the Spirit of Antichriſt under the Notion of Philoſophy (a falſifying Glaſs which can repreſent one thing

thing in divers shapes) the World is darkned, and the Key of Knowledg is laid by, and the Kingdom of Heaven shut up, according to that of the Prophet, *Thy Wisdom, and thy Knowledg, it hath perverted thee*: a Woman once going to be burnt at the Stake, for being a Christian, answered those who would by Arguments perswade her to renounce her Religion, *I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can die for Christ.* Be ready then (like this Woman) rather to suffer, then by Seditious Arguments to give offence.

Finally (My Beloved Lambs) *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men, the Lord is at hand: For he that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.* Give no offence, *but submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreame, Or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him, for the Punishment of evil doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.*

Had our Noble and Heroick King stood out against that Principle that perswaded him to the Religion he now Professes, he had been much to blame: but now considering his Courage (which hath leap'd over the Wall of Worldly Temptations and Stumbling Block of the fear of losing his Crown and Kingdom) he is a greater Conqueror then *Alexander the Great*, and more Powerful then any of his Ancestors. It is the Lord's work and doing, therefore let no Man grudge or repine; *For the Powers that be, are ordained of GOD: Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God.* Therefore with the Apostle, *Honour all Men, Love the Brotherhood, Fear God, Honour the KING.* Be charitable in Opinion, and Judge no Man, especially those that are without: *Paul* was much dejected to think that the *Israelites* his Kinsfolk should not be Saved; but after serious and deep Meditation, he cryeth out as with a *Plaudite*, *God hath shut them all up together in unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon them all. O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Waies past finding out.* It is very observable that the Apostle relateth, that after the Elected *Israelites* were sealed in the Fore heads, he saw a great Multitude which no Man could Number, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues, which stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with White Robes, and Palms in their hands. Grace and Peace then be upon all the *Israel* of God, and all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in *Sincerity*; for there is neither *Greek*, nor *Jew*, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, *Barbarian*, *Scythian*, Bond, nor Free, but Christ is all, and in all.

Now to him whose Kingdom is *Ubiquity*, and whose Duration is *Eternity*, God all sufficient, who only is able to keep you Spotless, and present you before the Throne of his Grace, with exceeding great joy, *and do abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the Power that worketh in us, be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages, World without end. Amen.*

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